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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 000405

SIPDIS

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TAGS: PREL PGOV EFIN EI

SUBJECT: SPECIAL ECONOMIC ENVOY KELLY,S VISIT TO DUBLIN

REF: BELFAST 76

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Classified By: DCM Robert J. Faucher. Reasons 1.4(b/d).

¶1. (C) From September 16-18, Ambassador Rooney and Special Economic Envoy for Northern Ireland Declan Kelly met with Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen, President Mary McAleese, Foreign Minister Micheal Martin, and Labour Party leader Eamon Gilmore. These meetings coincided with the Global Irish Economic Forum hosted by the Irish government.

FM: FOCUS ON ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

¶2. (C) ForMin Martin said there was a sense of stagnation in Northern Ireland right now, that Northern Ireland "needs prodding." He said Ireland shared the U.S. focus on economic initiatives; Ireland had found that trade and small-business initiatives were the best way to intensify useful contacts between North and South on the island. He said American involvement in Northern Ireland remained very important, but that the U.S. should focus on moving things along at judiciously chosen times, rather than try to be everywhere all the time; getting progress on devolution of policing and justice was now the key.

PM: BRITISH-IRISH RE-ENGAGEMENT

¶3. (C) In a brief meeting, Prime Minister Cowan reiterated Martin's points as outlined in para 2 above. The PM stressed his agreement with Kelly that it was important that the British and the Irish re-engage on the North more pro-actively given the current stasis. The PM said he would stay in close contact with us in order to support Kelly's work as Economic Envoy.

PRESIDENT MCALEESE: ON-THE-GROUND WORK NEEDED

¶4. (C) President McAleese remarked on the number of changes in the past 10 years. Government officials from Northern Ireland routinely attend meetings in the south and a number of niche all-island bodies have been established. In particular, she lauded the tourism industry for its efforts. However, she cautioned that in most parishes there has been no real change. Further, she indicated that there is a growing disconnect between the Republican leaders and the younger generation. In past years, leaders sought Ireland's assistance in organizing trips for teenagers during marching season. However, she received no such request this year and a series of minor disturbances resulted. McAleese feared that there is no one left to do work on the ground.

LABOUR: SINN FEIN, DUP EXCLUDE OTHER VOICES

¶ 15. (C) Gilmore noted that he is in frequent contact with Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) leaders in Northern Ireland and that it is their belief that Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) have converged to exclude all other parties and maintain the sectarian divide. He believes that Ireland has been too preoccupied with itself and the EU and needs to devote further attention to Northern Ireland. His sense is that Dublin is largely "out of the loop" with respect to the North and he believes the "Irish dimension" has slipped. Gilmore affirmed that he plans to devote more time to the North and to be more active in all-island issues.

KELLY: BREAKING OUT OF THE STALEMATE

¶ 16. (C) Kelly told his interlocutors the situation was very serious in Northern Ireland, with total intransigence characterizing the politicians of both sides and no dialogue happening at all. He noted that both sides are using the current economic climate as an excuse to "run out the clock" on negotiations. Further, Kelly cautioned that the DUP is increasingly citing the need to reach out to unionists to make sure they are comfortable with any proposed step. Kelly described his short-term objective of getting large-impact "quick wins" followed up by a longer-term program of interfacing with the Northern Ireland community organizations and business to get them to take charge of an agenda of progress. The U.S. role, he said, was to advise at the margins, help generate interest in investing in Northern Ireland, encourage the Northern Irish themselves to take the

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lead, and do everything in close coordination with Ireland, the UK and the Northern Irish. He added that for too long, the North has expected America to arrive with "Santa sacks" and that this practice would no longer continue. Northern Ireland must take the reins itself.

CLINTON GLOBAL INITIATIVE

¶ 17. (C) Kelly invited ForMin Martin to participate in a possible forum on investment in Northern Ireland on September 23 at the annual meeting of former President Clinton's Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) in New York. Other guests at the forum would be Northern Ireland First Minister Peter Robinson (DUP), Northern Ireland Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness (Sinn Fein), and British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shaun Woodward. Martin never directly said he couldn't participate, but did say that he was not planning on going to the UNGA, but rather staying in Ireland until the October 2 Lisbon Treaty referendum. (NOTE: FM Martin subsequently agreed to participate at the CGI. END NOTE.)

ECONOMIC FOCUS NECESSARY

¶ 18. (C) The Ambassador, Martin and Kelly all agreed on the importance of initiatives targeting communities that would reap visible results quickly and help Northern Ireland regain a sense of momentum. They agreed on the importance of cross-community reconciliation, changing the mind-sets of people toward the future and away from a focus on the past (with a possible reflex reaction back to violence). Martin remarked that the politicians in Northern Ireland were paralyzed by an obsession with the minutiae of how the two sides interact with each other, and that an economic focus was necessary to get beyond this situation. The business community was tired of politics because of the paralysis in

Stormont, and ready to build a better future with a pragmatic emphasis on communities and investment. In a subsequent discussion with the DCM, a contact at the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs re-iterated Martin's concern regarding the political paralysis.

MARTIN: SECRETARY VISIT WELCOME

¶9. (C) ForMin Martin emphasized particularly that he would welcome a visit by the Secretary. He said that it would be an optimal time for the Secretary's visit considering the urgency of progress toward devolution of policing/justice. He said he valued the commitment the U.S. showed with its appointment of Kelly as Economic Envoy, and he stressed the importance of close coordination between the U.S., UK and Ireland.

¶10. (U) Special Economic Envoy Kelly did not have an opportunity to clear this message.
ROONEY